

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMCONSUL LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 00459

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, PINT
SUBJECT: GENERAL ZIA TALKS WITH JOURNALISTS - REPROCESSING,
VAJPAYEE VISIT, AND BHUTTO MENTIONED

1. ACCORDING TO DAILY PRESS, CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR
(CMLA) ZIA, AT A DINNER JANUARY 11 HE HOSTED FOR BRITISH
JOURNALISTS TRAVELLING WITH PM CALLAGHAN, MADE THE FOLLOWING
POINTS:
-- INDIAN FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE MAY VISIT PAKISTAN IN THE NEAR
FUTURE AT GOP INVITATION. ZIA HAD "NO INHIBITION" ABOUT GOING TO
INDIA AND WOULD BE PREPARED TO DO SO SOMETIME IN FEBRUARY. HE IS
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ALSO READY TO WELCOME INDIAN PMUDESAI TO ISLAMABAD. (ZIA HELD
PUBLICIZED MEETING WITH INDIAN AMB BAJPAI LAST WEEK. PAK PRESS
JANUARY 13 CARRIES STORY THAT DESAI HAS INDICATED THAT VAJPAYEE
WILL VISIT ISLAMABAD IN LATE JANUARY/EARLY FEBRUARY.)
--SIX MORE CASES AGAINST FORMER PM BHUTTO ARE READY TO BE FILED IN
COURT. (ZIA ALSO SAID, ALTHOUGH NOT CARRIED IN THE PRESS, THAT THE
CASES WILL BE ANNOUNCED ABOUT JANUARY 26 AND WILL INCLUDE

"SUBVERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION.")

--ZIA'S "HOPE" THAT ELECTIONS WOULD BE HELD IN 1978; HE GAVE NO DATE OTHER THAN SAYING THEY WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE IN MARCH.

2. ACCORDING TO BBC CORRESPONDENT WHO ATTENDED DINNER, ZIA ALSO COMMENTED ON THE RECORD ABOUT THE REPROCESSING PLANT IMBROGLIO ALTHOUGH, WE ASSUME AT GOP DIRECTION, HIS COMMENTS HAVE NOT BEEN CARRIED IN THE LOCAL PRESS. ZIA SAID THAT HE PERSONALLY IS NOT EMOTIONAL ABOUT REPROCESSING, BUT IT IS A "HOT ISSUE" IN PAKISTAN. THE CMLA STATED THE US WAS PUTTING PRESSURE ON PAKISTAN AND, WHEN ASKED WHAT KIND, REPLIED "THEY HAVE THREATENED TO CUT OFF AID." OFF THE RECORD HE ADDED THAT "AMERICANS ARE NOT SOPHISTICATED DIPLOMATS OR POLITICIANS" AND REPEATED THE PAKISTANI FOLK WISDOM THAT DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATIONS FAVOR INDIA AND REPUBLICAN, PAKISTAN.

3. IN DISCUSSION ABOUT BHUTTO, ZIA SAID THAT ALTHOUGH HE IS NOT A SPENT FORCE IN PAKISTANI POLITICS, HIS ONLY FOLLOWERS NOW ARE THOSE WHO BENEFITTED FROM HIS POLITICAL PATRONAGE (SIC). THE CMLA REITERATED HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT ANY ELECTIVE OFFICE IN PAKISTAN, INCLUDING PRESIDENT, AND HE SAID THAT AFTER A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IS INSTALLED, HE WILL RETIRE AS CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF. HE MENTIONED THAT THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION AND SOME OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE DISCUSSED VARIOUS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS. OTHER THAN SAYING THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS DID NOT INCLUDE A LARGER CONSTITUTIONAL ROLE FOR THE MILITARY, HE DID NOT ELABORATE. CONFIDENTIAL

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4. ZIA ADDED THAT HE WOULD DISCUSS WITH PM CALLAGHAN THE POSSIBILITY OF PAKISTAN'S REJOINING THE COMMONWEALTH; PRESS REPORTS QUOTE HIM AS SAYING ONLY THAT A DECISION ON PAKISTANI COMMONWEALTH MEMBERSHIP MUST BE LEFT TO A SUCCESSOR GOVERNMENT. HUMMEL

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